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AUTHOR Stafford, Ann K.; Baxter, Janice H.
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ABSTRACT

In 1976, the School District of Oconee County, South Carolina was awarded a federal grant to identify and serve children (3 to 6 years old) who were termed gifted and talented by ranking in the upper 2% of the population. A curriculum was devised to meet the needs of the gifted and talented student. The curriculum moved the child through a developmental sequence with the ultimate goal being to involve the child in a cycle of learning. (Author/SBH)

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CURRICULUM FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

Submitted: Ann K. Stafford and Janice H. Baxter
Teachers Early Childhood Program
for Gifted and Talented
Bountyland School
Route # 4, Box 238
Seneca, South Carolina 29678
Phone: (803) 882-1764

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Background

In August 1976, the Appalachian Regional Commission awarded a grant to the School District of Oconee County for a pilot program for young gifted children, ages 3-6. The program was to identify and provide educational services for 64 gifted children.

Oconee County is located in the western corner of South Carolina and serves a public school population of 10,000 children. The population is spread throughout this rural region with concentration in three small towns.

The economy of the county was historically agricultural, then textiles, but is now becoming more diversified. This diversification includes a nuclear reactor complex, Clemson University in the adjoining county, and recreational facilities associated with the two large lakes in the area.

The project seeks to identify those children who are termed gifted and talented by virtue of ranking in the upper 2% of the population. The identification procedures involve the use of the McCarthy Scale of Children's Abilities and a Piaget Concept Assessment Scale. The procedures do not delineate interests or talent areas but children are given opportunities to futher develop their cognitive strength through areas of interest or talent. The program is based on the early childhood philosophy of developing the whole child, but seeks to meet the

needs of these children who need more challenge than that of their present program or home situation. The program seeks to extend the objectives of the ongoing public school early childhood programs. A curriculum was developed to meet the needs of the children who were identified without duplicating the programs of the school system.

An attempt was made to devise a curriculum which would include the essential elements of flexibility, open-endedness, planning, decision-making, and sequential learning. The curriculum developed for this program utilizes the cognitive, affective and psychomotor taxonomies of Bloom, Krathwhol, and Dave (Educational Systems Associates, 1974). While the curriculum is very general, an attempt is now underway to define specifics in the general taxonomy levels, and to match activities to these specifics. Care must be given to avoid delineation to the extent that it restricts the child as he moves through the various stages or levels. The various stages must become internalized by the child. Utilizing work by Treffinger (1974) and Weikart (1974) the curriculum was made more appropriate for gifted young children by matching teaching/learning styles (Treffinger, 1974) and classroom management procedures (Weikart, 1974). The project found the matched classroom procedures to be essential because of the emphasis on allowing for and planning for individual development. Also, an open classroom teaching procedure was necessary because of the young age of the children. Unique to this program was the combination of the taxonomies with appropriate teaching/learning styles joined by an open-ended classroom procedure which insures sequential development.

The children attend class either one or two two-hour sessions per week. Steps are taken to make arrangements that do not interfere with the child's regular program since this program was intended to supplement the child's learning experiences. Three classrooms are set-up in three different areas of rural Oconee County in order to serve the children as close to their homes and schools as possible. Transportation is provided by the program so that no child will be excluded from participation.

Curriculum and Classroom Strategies

The classrooms are arranged in learning centers. Materials in the centers are selected so that they can be used for more than one activity. Many of the materials are used in more than one activity center. Upon entering the classroom, the child goes directly to the "planning table" in order to record his plans for the day. Completing a project according to the individual's devised plan is stressed and evaluated.

The curriculum was used from the inception of the program and found to be extremely useful and successful. Because the curriculum moves the child through the correct developmental sequence and because the child is responsible for his own plan, each child is able to grow at his own pace. This curriculum would have practical application for the regular classroom as it provides for individual differences in ability. Since the goal of many special education programs is to mainstream the

children into regular classrooms, this curriculum could be a solution to a tremendous management problem.

The curriculum is divided into six levels beginning with Level I. Level V involves the highest levels of the taxonomies which is contingent on previous experiences. Therefore, when using the curriculum, the teacher should be extremely careful to move each child sequentially through the levels. Level VI indicates the ultimate goal of the curriculum which is to involve the child in a cycle of learning: Child plans - completes task - evaluates - plans new project based on previous evaluation. Each child is carefully evaluated as he moves through the levels in order that he can continue to progress.

Projections for the Future

Attempts are presently underway to train classroom teachers in this curriculum so more mainstreaming can take place in the regular classroom setting. This mainstreaming will enable the gifted student to be challenged more hours of the week than can be done in a resource (4 hours per week) situation.

In addition, more specific objectives are being written to fit into this curriculum framework. The specific objectives or steps are being developed for more refined sequential development leading toward the various levels.

TAXONOMIES	TEACHING/LEARNING STYLE	MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
LEVEL I Cognitive-knowledge Affective-receiving/ responding Psychomotor-imitation	Command Style	Teacher plans the day	Objectives - Child follows plan as dictated by teacher. Child indicates plan for working in centers with teacher guidance. Sample Activities - Teacher takes children on tour of classroom and allows time to use materials in each center in a new way demonstrated by the teacher. Child utilizes choice board with color/ shape symbols for centers to indicate his plan to work in chosen centers.
LEVEL II Cognitive-comprehension Affective-responding Psychomotor-manipulation	Reciprocal Style	Child is influnced in making his own plan by other children.	Objectives - Child makes his own plan and indicates his choice with symbols. Child makes his own plan consulting either the teacher or his friends. Sample Activities - Child indicates his plan on a plan sheet utilizing shape and color symbols. Child shows no hesitation in indicating his own plan but is easily influenced by his friends.

TAXONOMIES	TEACHING/LEARNING STYLE	MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
LEVEL III Cognitive-application Affective-responding Psychomotor-precision	Individual Program (Teacher Designed)	Child makes his own plan according to what is available in the room.	Objectives - Child makes his own plan using symbols to indicate choice of center. Child makes plan to work in a center at least 15 minutes. Child makes plan and indicates choice of symbol using written words or stamping name of center. Child indicates choice of center and choice of activity within that center. Sample Activities - Child plans without assistance from another child or adult. Child remains in a center and involved in an activity for 15 minutes. Child writes or stamps the name of the chosen center. Child, either verbally or in written form, communicates intended activity within the center.
LEVEL IV Cognitive-analysis Affective-value	Guided Discovery	Child plans and completes project	Objectives - Child plans an activity that will involve him for at least

TAXONOMIES	TEACHING/LEARNING STYLE	MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
LEVEL IV continued Psychomotor-articulation		within one class time period.	30 minutes of the scheduled class time. Child carefully analyzes project and indicates a detailed plan. Sample Activities - Child's plan indicates center, materials, and outline of project. Childs plan for activity indicates detail and finished project includes numerous details.
LEVEL V Cognitive-synthesis Affective-organization Psychomotor-articulation	Problem Solving	Child plans project and requests items not available in the classroom.	Objectives - Child plans project which will involve entire class period. Child plans project involving equipment or some materials not immediately available to him. Child plans project which will take more than one class period to complete. Sample Activities - Child carefully plans and writes complete plan for project. Child requests some materials not available in the classroom. Child

TAXONOMIES	TEACHING/LEARNING STYLE	MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES
LEVEL V continued			follows plan and when necessary, changes his plan before continuing project.
LEVEL VI Cognitive-evaluation Affective-characterization Psychomotor-naturalization	Individual Program (student designed)	Child evaluates own work and makes new plan on the basis of his own evaluation.	Objectives - Child verbally evaluates his plan with assistance from the teacher. Child formulates new plan based on his own evaluation. Child evaluates plan - details both success and disappointments. Sample Activities - Child and teacher formulates a written evaluation. Child plans new project while consulting evaluation of previous projects. Child completes the entire cycle on his own, (Child plans - completes task - evaluates - plans new project based on previous evaluation).

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